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binations. We have remarked that our tastes may, and will, modify our demands upon the artist, and it is his province to administer to that taste of his patrons in so far as it is legitimate and pure. Or, the artist may become a teacher; and, by his labors, seek to develop that taste in the right direction, and thus familiarize the American mind with a proper and a pure construction of the principles upon which all truth, in representation, is based. This is surely a high office, and necessitates in the artist many great and good qualities, which can only be won by study of Nature, and a full understanding of those principles upon which all harmony, all truth, are grounded.

But we would be understood as discouraging that trait, or rather *penchant*, of our people, which induces an assumption of greatness that we surely do not possess, in the way of Art works at least. The Canadian, in Voltaire's "L'Ingénu," when asked, "which language he thought best, the English or the French?" said, "the Huron!" and the answer has seemed to the generality of readers as something noble, indicative of pride in country, and self-possession. But it was an exhibition of egotism, as absurd as the Chinese contempt for the "outer world," which it esteems vastly its inferior in true greatness and knowledge; and when any American critic gives currency to the idea of any "nationality" which shall shame the conceptions of art-devotees in Europe, we must ascribe to such critic the same profound ignorance which marks the Celestial.

In the truly Cosmopolitan sense must Art be studied and construed: any other interpretation must be both untruthful and unjust. Be the artist German or American, he should be recognised according to his merit; and no prejudice against his birth should serve to blind us to his worth. He is the best critic who is familiar with the works of many masters; and he is the truest exponent of Art who recognizes truth and beauty as they exist in presences around him. It is a beneficent office, then, that the Association, of which this Journal is the child, proposes, when it lends its aid to bring together the works of many masters, that thus all may study for themselves in the great school of observation and comparison, wherein all best judgments are formed. The name "Cosmopolitan" was assumed only after mature considera-

tion, and when it was decided to give the Institution truly world-wide sympathies and brotherhoods. It aims at no sectionalism, and shall in no way minister to prejudices or assumptions which would narrow its labors, or circumscribe its influence. To achieve its mission, it will draw upon Art, everywhere, for contributions, which, in proper time, shall find their way over the length and breadth of our land; thus bringing into the homes of our people the works of many lands, and thus enabling all to form a true estimate of what Art in America is, and what it ought to be.



WHAT WE NEED.



THE English press has been slow to see and acknowledge merit in American Literature; but, of late, the compliments which many of our authors receive, as well as the large sale of their works, is an assurance that Johnny Bull has resolved to be pleased with his boy Jonathan, and to encourage him by a little tickling of his vanity. Longfellow has had finer notices of his "Hiawatha," from the *London Leader*, the *Examiner*, &c., than any American authority has yet vouchsafed to the poet; while Prescott, Emerson, Carey, Mrs. Stowe, and others, are exalted to a first rank in their various departments of letters. This is all right, and very kind of our ancestor; but, after all, it don't amount to much more than the good estimation of a friend who sees some *profit* in friendship. We prefer the estimate of some clear, capable critic, bred on this side of the water, familiar with our idiosyncracies, and versed in the *geography* of our Mind. Such critics, it is true, are very rare; but we have them, and by their writings they are gradually giving tone and direction to our taste and literary judgments.

That we have no "organ" of criticism is painfully apparent. "The Criterion," whose brief life terminated a few months since, essayed the Zoilus throne, and it did well, very well. Its demise was a source of regret to all who bid God speed to our letters. The "North American Review" does well its part; but a quarterly is *too slow* in our "fast" day—its notices are generally old, and the reader's

attention is already fixed upon some later book of the author reviewed, or upon some more elaborate work upon the same theme of the book noticed. A *weekly* review is what our literature demands; and what, we think, will be forthcoming, during the current year.

The monthlies *ought* to discharge the duties of Censor, as become the most prosperous publications in our country; but, that they sadly fail in their critical departments, is patent to all: their "notices" scarcely amount to anything else than good advertisements of their own, or their friends' wares. Such a thing as an honest, earnest, luminous criticism,—of the character of those of the English Reviews, which do such honor to their literature,—is almost unknown; and our best books make their way, unheralded, unmarked, and so far as true criticism is concerned, unrecognised. It is true that "Putnam's Magazine" arrogates to itself the office of censor to our literature; but, that it is mere arrogance, the intelligent observer must admit. Occasionally a paper finds its way to its pages, which shows *brains* in its composition, betrays scholarship, mental worth; but seventy-five of one hundred of its articles smack more of literary light artillery and dilettantism than of solid worth. This, as applied to its general character; while its professed "reviews" are such as would do small honor to our daily press, betraying not only haste in their preparation, but also the unfitness of the critic for the office he essays. The "review" of Andersson's "Lake Ngami," in the December number, is a specimen of the "first class" articles which the monthly is pleased to regard as the *best* our writers can produce! If 'tis the best, then how inferior, vastly so, are we to the English! It makes one to blush for shame that the assumptions of the "American Monthly" place American authors in such a humiliating position.

"Harper," "Knickerbocker," "Graham," "Godey," &c., make no pretensions to literary supremacy, to being the "organ of the *best* American Mind;" but strive to please in their various ways; with what success, their large lists are evidence. The field of the Censor and Essayist is almost unworked in our literature. It was the office of "Putnam" to bring it into fruitful prominence; its success is also evidenced by its list, which, we believe, is comparatively small—much

smaller than the first edition of its first number.

That we need a high-toned, generously conducted Magazine, which *shall be* the repository of the labors of the better and elder class of our authors, none can doubt. Our writers of marked genius are many, and their lights ought to burn glorious records on the pages of our literature:—alas! that they do not! Immersed in College recitation rooms, filling pulpits, occupied in the lecture arena, or busy in the pursuit of some "paying" profession, our best minds are not accessible to the reader of current letters—they pass away the precious years in working for the few, not the many; in coining for time, not for immortality. A magazine of the order we have suggested, would stimulate them to expression; would call out their mental resources, and spread such a feast before the great reading public as would direct American taste and studies into noble channels. Think of a Monthly, in whose pages Emerson, Everett, Carey, Longfellow, Prof. Felton, Whipple, Prof. De Vere, Gayarre, Dr. Griswold, Sims, Ripley, Gallagher, Willis, Mrs. Kirkland, Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Howe, Mrs. Stowe, Lowell, Ticknor, Hawthorn, Hildreth, Judge Conrad, Prof. Agassiz, E. G. Squire, Lieut. Maury, Prof. Page, &c., &c., should be the contributors! Surely, such a corps of writers would authorize the assumption—"organ of the best American mind;" and such a monthly alone as will command their contributions, is worthy of recognition by the American public as the best our popular writers can accomplish.

Our office certainly is not that of "Director of Public Taste;" though, as we have some influence, it is right to speak as the spirit moves, leaving it for the reader to judge of the justice of the hints and strictures we offer. Nothing is set down in malice—we only speak as one of those who have at heart the best interests of Art and Literary taste in America. So long as we have the *matériel* in our midst for great accomplishment, we have each a duty to perform—to talk, think, act, until something shall result to enure to our national credit. In this respect, we shall try and do our part.

[If what we have now written seems inconsistent with the notice accorded one of the magazines, in our last number, it may be proper to state, that such notice did not meet the eye of the editor until it was in print.]

WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?



THE similarities discoverable in many eminent poems, causes the reader to doubt if there be such a thing as an entirely original poem; while the charges of plagiarism are preferred against our most beloved poets, in such a general, as well as a specific manner, that, at first, we grow to distrust their truthfulness and their genius. But, it becomes us to inquire, since light, and air, and summer, and life, are free; if, also, thoughts of these are not free; if impressions are not free; if emotions awakened by them are not free? If they are, then may there be similarity in many an utterance, and no plagiarism be perpetrated. It is only when the idiosyncrasy of the fancy, of the thought, of the emotion, is stolen or adopted, that such a charge will hold good: and the poet may sing freely, so long as it is his own inspiration that is speaking.

In illustration of this point, we might refer to LONGFELLOW'S "Psalm of Life." This fine poem is regarded as one of the most perfect in the English language; yet, we remember to have seen an analysis of it which produced a parallel for almost every line or couplet—these parallels being drawn from every imaginable source, from the Koran down to the sermons of LORENZO DOW. Who believed that the poet had gone to such sources for the material of that exquisite lyric? The charge of plagiarism, in that instance, was simply preposterous: for the poet probably never saw one-half of the quotations used against him, and what he may have seen of them, probably never recurred to his mind during the composition of the poem, which was simply the utterance by his own heart of lessons and feelings which he had won from a life's experience: the same thoughts and feelings may have been experienced by others, but they were, nevertheless, as much his own as was the right to think and feel.

The readings of some "Desultory Man" have placed us in possession of an instance in point, which we adopt, since that analysis of the "Psalm of Life" is wanting. Quoting the Epitaph of GRAY'S celebrated "Elegy:"

"Here rests his head upon the lap of earth,
A youth to fortune and to fame unknown;

Fair science frowned not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy mark'd him for her own."

The following parables are new:

—"How glad would lay me down,
As in my Mother's lap."

Milton—*Paradise Lost*, 10, 277.

"On their mother Earth's dear lap did lie."

Spenser—*Fairy Queen*, 5, 7, 9

"Or rests his head upon a rock till morn."

Addison's *Cato*.

"Reditur enim terræ corpus, et ita locatum ad sitim quasi operimento matris obducitur."—*Cicero de loquibus*, 2, 22.

"Gremium matris terræ."—*Lucretius*, 1, 291.

"Nam terra novissime complexa gremio jam a reliqua natura abnegatos, tum maxime, ut mater, operit."—*Pliny's Natural History*, 2, 63.

"Quem tu Melpomene semel
Nascentem placidè lumine videris."

Horace's *Od.*, 4, 3, 1.

"Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heav'n did a recompense as largely send;
He gave to mis'ry (all he had) a tear,
He gained from heav'n ('twas all he wished) a friend."

Epitaph, 2d Stanza.

"Large was his soul, as large a soul as e'er
Submitted to inform a body here."

Cowley, vol. 1, 119.

"His words were simple, and his soul sincere."

Dryden's *Ovid*.

"His fame ('tis all the dead can have) shall live."

Pope's *Homer*, 16, 556.

"No farther seeks his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
Where they alike in trembling hope repose,
The bosom of his Father and his God."

Epitaph, 3d Stanza.

"Paventoso speme."—*Petronius—Son.* 16.

"Spe trepido"—*Lucan*, 7, 207.

"With trembling tenderness of hope and fear."

Funeral Hymn, 473

"Divided here 'twixt trembling hope and fear."

Beaumont's *Psyche*, 15, 314

What man in his sober senses will say that GRAY stole from these sources? Or if he did appropriate, from which, since several have singularly enough fallen upon the thought and almost identical expression, the more modern poet adopted? It certainly were more plausible to believe that the poet, dreaming in the quiet church-yard, had all those impressions; felt all those emotions which he has reproduced in such almost faultless rhythm and perfectness of expression. That he labored through tomes for a thought, an idea, and then studiously dropped it into the stanza, is too incredible for any consideration; and yet, it is just such a theft that mousing critics are occasionally preferring against many an eminent and truly noble poem. Out upon *such* fault-finding.